

BA(Hons) Songwriting – Course Specification

Full Title of the Course & Award	BA (Hons) Songwriting
Mode of Attendance	Full-time
Length of course	This course is taught as a three-year course at levels 4, 5 and 6.
Start date	Initial validation of three-year course in 2014: first cohort 2014/15.
Awarding Institution	University of Sussex
Teaching Institution	BIMM Brighton; BIMM Institute London; BIMM Institute Bristol; BIMM Institute Berlin; BIMM Institute Manchester; BIMM Institute Birmingham; BIMM Institute Hamburg
UCAS Code	3C46
Language of Study	English
Final Award	Certificate of Higher Education (exit award only at level 4) Diploma of Higher Education (exit award only at level 5) Bachelors Degree with Honours
FHEQ Level	120 credits at Level 4 120 credits at Level 5 120 credits at Level 6
Reference Points	QAA Subject Benchmark in Music (2008) QAA UK Quality Code (2012) UoS Partnership Procedures (2013-14)
Minimum Period of Registration	For the three-year course at levels 4,5, and 6: 3 years
Maximum Period of Registration	6 years (3-year Course)
Admissions Criteria	32 UCAS tariff score (2 A levels at grade E or above or equivalent vocational qualifications; 5 GCSEs at grade C or above, including English) An equivalent qualification or experiential learning is acceptable via our AP(E)L processes
Date of Course Specification: Revisions:	September 2013, September 2016

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Course Structure

Year 1		
Module Name	Credits	Optionality
Songwriting Styles & Genres	20	Core
Songwriting Techniques	20	Core
Music Business	20	Core
Artist Development & Entrepreneurship	20	Core
Live Performance Workshop	20	Core
Music Theory in Practice	20	Core
Year 2		
Module Name	Credits	Optionality
Research Methods	20	Core
Cultural Perspectives	20	Core
Writing for Digital Media	20	Core
Music Publishing	20	Core
Creative Processes	20	Core
Performance in Context	20	Optional
Applied Music Theory & Critical Listening	20	Optional
Studio Musicianship (Delivered at Brighton, London and Manchester only)	20	Optional
Studio Recording (Delivered at Brighton, London and Manchester only)	20	Optional
Performing with Creative Technology (Delivered at Berlin, Birmingham, Bristol, Hamburg, London and Manchester only)	20	Optional
Year 3		
Module Name	Credits	Optionality
Professional Project	40	Core
Professional Development	20	Core
Analytical Perspectives	20	Core
Commercial Songwriting	20	Core
Ensemble Performance	20	Optional
Music Teaching Practice	20	Optional
Music Theory & Analysis	20	Optional
Online Music	20	Optional

Each student takes 120 credits each year and will be required to have passed 360 credits to receive the full degree. Students must pass 120 credits each year to progress. The overall degree classification is based on grades achieved in year 2 and year 3.

In year two students choose one of the optional modules available.

In year three students choose one of the optional modules available.

Timetables

Timetables are made available at enrolment. While every effort is made to make the timetables as student friendly as possible classes could be timetabled any time between 9am-6pm, Monday – Friday (9am -8pm at BIMM London only). Classes may also be at different BIMM buildings depending on tutor and resource availability.

On average, full time students will have around 9-11 class contact hours per week.

Year Structure

Years at BIMM Institute are divided into three 10 week terms. The academic year usually starts late September/early October and runs until the end of June. The resit period is usually in August.

Work Load

Year 1

Total Graded Assessments	10
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Timing of Graded Assessments	
Term 1	1 Assessment
Term 2	3 Assessments
Term 3	6 Assessments

Module	Mode of assessment	Duration or word length	Submission Week	Weighting
Songwriting Techniques	Composition Portfolio 1	1000 words plus recording	Week 20	40%
	Composition Portfolio 2	1500 words plus recording	Week 27	60%
Songwriting Styles & Genres	Arrangement Analysis Presentation and Q&A	15 minutes	Week 25-30	100%
Music Business	Citation Task	500 words	Week 9	10%
	Current Developments Essay	2500 words	Week 25	90%
Artist Development & Entrepreneurship	Music Project Proposal	1500 words	Week 15	30%
	Music Project Presentation	15 minutes	Week 27-30	70%
Live Performance Workshop (SW)	Ensemble Performance 1	10 minutes	Week 18-19	40%
	Ensemble Performance 2	10 minutes	Week 28-29	60%
Music Theory in Practice	Written & Aural Exam	120 minutes	Week 29	100%

Total Teaching learning and Assessment	286.5 Hrs
Total Self-Directed Study	960 Hrs

Year 2

Total Graded Assessments	8-9
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Timing of Graded Assessments	
Term 1	1 Assessments
Term 2	1-2 Assessments
Term 3	6 Assessments

Module	Mode of assessment	Duration or word length	Submission Week	Weighting
Research Methods	Proposal	1000 words	Week 10	20%
	Research Project	3500 words	Week 27	80%
Cultural Perspectives	Short Essay	1000 words	Week 19	25%
	Long Essay	3000 words	Week 26	75%
Music Publishing	Business Report	3500 words	Week 25	100%
Writing for Digital Media	Showreel and written Critical Analysis	7-10 minutes and 2000 words	Week 28	100%
Creative Processes	Composition Portfolio	2 song recording and 2000 words	Week 26	100%
Optional Modules – Students choose one of the following modules				
Studio Musicianship (Delivered at Brighton, London and Manchester only)	Practical Studio session and Evaluation	40 minutes	Week 25-29	100%
Studio Recording (Delivered at Brighton, London and Manchester only)	Studio Recording Session Proposal	1000 words	Week 15	30%
	Practical Studio Recording	60 minutes	Week 23-29	70%
Applied Music Theory & Critical Listening	Aural & Written Exam	120 minutes	Week 26	100%

Performance in Context	Performance Exam 1	10 minutes	Week 19-20	40%
	Performance Exam 2	20 minutes	Week 26-29	60%
Performing with Creative Technology (Delivered at Berlin, Birmingham, Bristol, Hamburg, London and Manchester only)	Audio-visual Presentation	10 minutes	Week 14	20%
	Performance and critical commentary	10 minutes and 1500 words	Week 26-30	80%

Total Teaching learning and Assessment	225 - 237.5 Hrs
Total Self-Directed Study	956.5 - 969 Hrs

Year 3

Total Graded Assessments	7 - 8
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Timing of Graded Assessments	
Term 1	1 Assessment
Term 2	1-2 Assessments
Term 3	5-6 Assessments

Module	Mode of assessment	Duration or word length	Submission Week	Weighting
Professional Project (double credit module)	Project Proposal	1500 words	Week 10	15%
	Either: Project Report & Portfolio, or Project Dissertation	Either: 4500 words + Evidence, Or: 8000 words	Week 27	85%
Professional Development	Patchwork Text Assessment	3000 words	Week 25	100%
Analytical Perspectives	Essay	3000 words	Week 26	100%
Commercial Songwriting	Negotiated Commercial Project Portfolio	10-minute recording, 1500 word essay and digital branding package	Week 25	100%
Optional Modules - Students choose one of the following modules				
Ensemble Performance	Performance Exam	20 minutes	Week 19-20	50%
	Performance Exam	20 minutes	Week 26-29	50%
Online Music	Online Music Case Study	3500 words	Week 26	100%
Music Theory & Analysis	Compositional Analysis	3500 words	Week 27	100%
Music Teaching Practice	Practical Assessment	30 minutes	Week 22-27	50%
	Teaching Project Portfolio	2500 words	Week 28	50%

Total Teaching learning and Assessment	175.5 Hrs
Total Self-Directed Study	1013 Hrs

*All details above are provided for guidance only but are believed to be accurate at the time of writing. Some figures could be affected by national holidays and exam timetables. If any modules are added or removed from the course before you start you will be informed prior to enrolment. Modifications may be made in line with our [Course Development and Approval Policy](#). Optional modules may not run if the number of students who wish to take the module are too low, in this case you will be contacted and offered alternative modules.

Assessments

Practical Exams

Practical exams ask you to demonstrate a practical skill under exam conditions. These practical skills could include things such as your ability to play your instrument, your ability to perform in an ensemble setting or your ability to produce a recording or operate hardware/software. The skill being tested will depend on the module and course being taken. Many practical assessments also contain a viva voce where the examiner will ask you questions regarding your exam and the related subject area.

Written exams

Many students will be familiar with this type of assessment. Written exams at BIMM are often used for theory and listening modules and are sat under exam conditions. For more details on exam conditions please refer to appendix 2 of [Section 15: BIMM-University of Sussex Undergraduate Academic Regulations](#)

Practical coursework

Practical coursework often asks you to demonstrate a practical skill but, unlike practical exams, you work on the assessment piece in self-directed study time and hand in the final assessment for marking. Examples of this type of assessment include writing a song or mixing a recording.

Multimedia coursework

Multimedia coursework contains a mixture of elements some written and some practical. An example of this type of assessment is creating a 3-page newspaper layout containing text and visual elements. On some courses, you may have to do portfolio assessments which you compile a mixture of audio/visual and written elements together this is usually done using online portfolio software.

Written coursework

Written course work is used in all BIMM courses and can take several forms.

- Research essays – in these assessments you will be expected to conduct research into the chosen topic. This could include secondary research (reading) or primary research (conducting original research such as focus groups/questionnaires etc.). You will then be required to write an essay based on this research, putting forward clear and concise arguments.
- Reflective essays – in these assessments you are required to reflect on your professional practice or development activities and identify areas for improvement. These essays do require you to engage in adequate research which will depend on what the subject of the reflective essay is.

- Dissertation/ Final year project – most courses have a large final year project which is double weighted. This is usually a combination of detailed research and reflective elements. Most courses require you to undertake an active project as the subject of your dissertation and this project is normally agreed with your tutor.
- Blog assessments – these assessments require you to submit regular written tasks normally to an online blog which are then combined to form the final assessment submission. These written tasks contain a mixture of reflective and research elements.
- Patchwork Text Assessments – these assessments are constructed from smaller written tasks given to the student throughout the year. The student then combines these smaller written tasks and submits them along with a final piece of writing that links the tasks together. These written tasks could be research or reflection based.
- Case Study – these assessments require you to research and write about a specific entity or section of the industry related to your course. For example, a case study of a record Label would require you to look at how the company works, what has made them successful etc.

In some cases, an assessment may combine two or more of these types of written work.

Presentations

In these assessments, you will be asked to make a planned presentation to an assessor or panel of assessors. Some presentation assignments ask you to reflect on your practice on the course while others are more academically focused and require you to engage in rigorous research.

Teaching and learning

Teaching

BIMM encourages its staff to employ a wide range of learning and teaching techniques. We provide training for new staff and many of our tutors are qualified teachers as well as industry professionals.

Most lessons will be in classes of 10-25 students however this will depend on the number of students that apply for a course and the resources that are available at the BIMM College you are applying to.

There are some larger lectures for bigger modules which are shared across multiple courses. These classes are delivered in a more traditional university lecture style to large groups of students.

For more detail on the teaching and Learning methods BIMM employs please see our [Learning and Teaching Strategy](#).

Self-directed study

All courses at BIMM have self-directed study hours associated with them. During this time, you are expected to be engaging in appropriate learning activities for your course. This could include practicing your instrument, conducting research, writing assignments and preparing for upcoming classes.

Formative Assessment

BIMM has a number of mechanisms for formative assessment which allow you to gain feedback before the final exam or coursework deadline.

Many modules have formative assignments built into them. In some cases, these are ungraded and are there purely so you can improve your final submission. Some modules use graded formative assessment, in these cases the formative assessment is only worth a small percentage of your final mark.

In-class activities are also used as an opportunity to provide feedback to students. During lessons, there are often opportunities to receive feedback from peers as well as the tutors and some lessons are heavily focused toward providing students who perform or present their work with feedback to help them improve.

Students can also take advantage of BIMM's tutorial system to gain additional feedback. The tutorial system allows you to book 1 to 1 sessions with tutors. You can use these sessions to gain specific feedback on any aspect of your work.

Work based Learning

The BA (hons) Event Management, BA (hons) Music Journalism and BA (hons) Music Business contain modules that require you to undertake work based learning.

During the second year of these courses you are expected to undertake a work experience placement for a minimum of 40 hours.

BIMM offers support in finding placements but students are responsible for arranging this work experience themselves in an area relevant to the course they are studying. If you choose a placement that is not local, you may incur travel costs. Most internships in the music industry are unpaid but you may be able to negotiate the paying of travel expenses.

Staff

BIMM is proud of its long history of employing music industry professionals to teach at all our colleges. We believe that through this practice we provide the best opportunities to our students to learn from tutors who understand their goals and have the knowledge and experience necessary to help make them a reality.

More information can be found regarding our tutors on our [staff page](#).

Unfortunately, BMM cannot guarantee which tutor will be teaching on individual modules as this will depend on tutor availability and when classes are timetabled.

Sometimes tutors are granted leave to engage in industry activities such as going on tour, conducting research or other professional development activities. This is vital to ensure that our tutors can give students the most current information, and share recent experiences, regarding a music industry that is constantly evolving and expanding into new areas.

Whenever a tutor goes on leave, whether it is due to industry activities or unavoidable factors such as illness or maternity leave, BIMM endeavours to ensure that lessons are covered by an industry professional with relevant experience in the subject. Through this practice, we aim to provide high quality learning opportunities throughout your course of study at BIMM.

Language

All qualifications at BIMM are taught and assessed in English

Costs

Tuition fees

Accurate tuition fees information can be found on our [finance page](#).

Proof of Student Loan or other funding body's acceptance of funding for the tuition fees, together with extent of funding provided must be received by BIMM Institute on or before 15th August. If such funding doesn't cover the full cost of your course of study a payment for the outstanding amount must be received by 15th August.

If you do not intend to apply for or are not eligible for a student loan/grant fees must be paid in full by 15th August.

Payment can be paid via debit/credit card at www.bimm.co.uk/pay or via bank transfer.

Any queries related to finance can be directed towards Financeenquiries@bimm.co.uk.

Additional Costs

Students who are thinking of applying to BIMM should read the [Essential Equipment](#) document which outlines what is required to successfully study at BIMM.

Most BIMM Colleges provide a limited number of rehearsal rooms, and free access to rehearsal facilities in local venues, unfortunately these can become fully booked at peak times and, at some colleges, are not available outside BIMM opening hours. Depending on when you want to rehearse and the frequency with which you want to rehearse you may need to pay for private rehearsal space.

Accommodation and Living Costs

Information about accommodation and living cost at each BIMM college can be found on the [Essential Documents](#) page.

Disabled Access

BIMM Berlin

Unfortunately, BIMM Berlin is currently not wheelchair accessible. Students who require wheelchair access are advised to apply to another BIMM college

BIMM Birmingham

All teaching buildings at BIMM Birmingham are wheelchair accessible.

BIMM Brighton

At BIMM Brighton the majority of teaching buildings are wheelchair accessible. However, our BIMM East building is currently not wheelchair accessible, this mainly affects Music Production courses. If you require wheelchair access every effort will be made to arrange different rooms that are accessible.

BIMM Bristol

All teaching buildings at BIMM Bristol are Wheelchair accessible, however some class rooms are not accessible, students who wish to study either Professional Musicianship (Drums) or Music Production are advised to apply to a different BIMM college if they require wheelchair access.

BIMM London

The main teaching building at BIMM London is wheelchair accessible. Our smaller second building offers full access to the student café – however, a small number of tutorial and lecture rooms are not wheelchair accessible. If you require wheelchair access every effort will be made to arrange different rooms that are accessible.

BIMM Manchester

All teaching buildings at BIMM Manchester are wheelchair accessible

For more information and details of how to apply for support please see our student disability guides (<http://www.bimm.co.uk/student-disability-guides/>)

Overview Updates

Version 1.1

- Assessment 1 in the Research Methods module in year 2 has changed to a 1000-word proposal.
- The optional modules available in each college have been updated. Some optional modules in year two will only run in certain colleges. For details please refer to the 'Course Structure' and 'Workload' sections of this document.
- BIMM Hamburg has been added as a delivery centre.